

## Comment Letter O040

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## CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAILROAD FANTASIES

The massive Draft Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIR/EIS) for the fanciful California High Speed Railroad (not train, no rail) System (CHSRS) requires trenchant analyses which most citizens do not have time nor capability to accomplish (we don't get paid for such an effort). None-the-less, enclosed are some comments about the Report and the System:

1) OVERPOPULATION. California has become grossly overpopulated, by five or six times at over 40,000,000 humans. The overpopulation of increasingly impoverished people being exploited by the greedy, destructive Ruling Class and Corrupt Governments can no longer pay to maintain, restore, and expand the fading infrastructure. Consequently, the Quality of Life of most Californians has been grossly degraded over the past fifty years. The urban disaster areas have become overcrowded human funnels and concrete wastelands featuring gridlocks everywhere - whether highway, water, air pollution, etc. The Urban Wastelands have become uninhabitable!

The Report optimistically assumes that the overpopulation must expand forever, thus justifying wasting billions of dollars on some High Speed Railroad System. Environmental, social, economic, political, etc. disasters will restrict population growth at some point.

Instead of wasting hundreds of billions if not trillions of dollars subsidizing assorted transportation schemes, including the CHSRS the money could better be spent REDUCING the overpopulation to reasonable and sustainable levels to restore the Quality of Life: STOP all immigration, deport aliens, carpetbaggers, and beggars, castrate the breeders (and feed the hungry), deport businesses and jobs elsewhere, etc.

The Growth-at-Every-Cost Criminals who have destroyed California as a better place to live are running an obscene PONZI SCHEME which requires more and more suckers to pay more and more taxes to prevent the bankrupt, corrupt, incompetent government from collapsing completely and to finance an endless list of projects to occupy the lives of overpaid politicians, bureaucrats, consultants, contractors, et al. Bankruptcy is at hand!

2) WELFARE FOR THE RICH. The major purpose of the Growth-at-Every-Cost Monies' endowment of massive, expensive projects is to provide Welfare for the Rich who get richer controlling and financing and constructing them and robbing the taxpaying suckers to pay for them. They are all on Welfare! Poor people will not be riding the CHSRS!

3) IS ALL OF THIS TRAVEL NECESSARY? The only reason why travel is increasing faster than the overpopulation is the cheap subsidized modes available paid for by the taxpaying suckers. If passengers were charged the full cost of travel there would be less unnecessary trips consumed including those on the CHSRS. There is no justification why the poor and middle classes should pay to subsidize the Idle/Idle Rich, the upper corporate and government bureaucrats, and other assorted parasites to indulge in shopping trips from San Diego to San Francisco at high, expensive, and convenient speeds, let them trade at the store around the corner! Let them meet on the electronic railroad!

4) LOW BALLING THE COST TO BRAINWASH THE SUCKERS. Like all pork barrel, smokestack, wastemoney projects the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats have deliberately underestimated the CHSRS cost as a means to gain the taxpayers' approval. At 700 miles and \$55-57,000,000,000 construction cost the CHSRS is claimed to cost \$47-53,000,000 per mile. At a more reasonable \$60,000,000 per mile the cost advances to \$42,000,000,000. At a ball park \$70,000,000 per mile the cost escalates to \$49,000,000,000.

If the claimed operating "profit" is extracted from passengers the private sector should be required to design, finance, construct, and operate the CHSRS; NOT the taxpaying suckers! Or, rob the Idle/Idle Rich to pay for it! Or, rob the passengers to pay for the CHSRS!

5) MEANDERING ROUTE STRUCTURE. The pork barrel, smokestack, wastemoney purpose of the CHSRS is revealed in the promoters' failure to recognize that the shortest distances between railroad stations (in miles, time, and money) is a straight line. The meandering routes between San Diego and Los Angeles and around the Tehachapi Loop negate the alleged purpose of the System - HIGH SPEED. So too for the Sacramento - San Francisco Loop!

6) INCOMPLETE ROUTE STRUCTURE. Missing from access to the San Ball Route Structure are the millions of people stuffed into the urban wasteland between San Diego and Los Angeles, millions more escaping along the Coast between Los Angeles and Albany, millions between San Francisco/Oakland and Sacramento, and millions more outside of the High Speed Corridors. The System must be expanded to include more passengers and VOTERS! (See enclosed Route Structure Maps). Why should they vote for the CHSRS?

7) PRIORITY ROUTE STRUCTURE. Evidently, far too many route miles have not been located and optimized to benefit the High Speed Railroad System, but have been mislocated for various social, environmental, political reasons and purposes. The CHSRS must have priority over other issues, problems, and goals in order to maximize its benefits over the LONG TERM. Obviously, heading for the long term stations will cost much more during construction but will result in increased ridership, revenue, and "profit."

So the CHSRS to replace the existing passenger railroad lines or supplement them? Should it become a long-distance System or a slow-speed commuter one? If High Speed over long distances is the goal money can be saved by limiting connections with the existing route structures. If subsidizing rich commuters is the purpose they do not need high-speed trains. High speeds cannot be maintained by stopping every 15 miles.

Will not elevated viaducts collapse in the next earthquakes and stop high-speed trains for long periods? Just like the highway viaducts!

If the CHSRS is to replace the existing routes why are billions of dollars being wasted subsidizing the private railroads by AMTRAK, the California Department of Transportation (CDOT), et al? They have wasted billions of dollars on badly conceived and designed stations, unnecessary route structure improvements, etc. Is it all PRK?

Who wants to ride a train in trenches and tunnels? Passengers cannot see the scenery and urban wastelands!

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If the CHSRS is constructed in the freight railroads' rights-of-way, freight train derailments and wrecks will involve or stop high-speed trains, so will hazardous material releases, explosions, and fires.

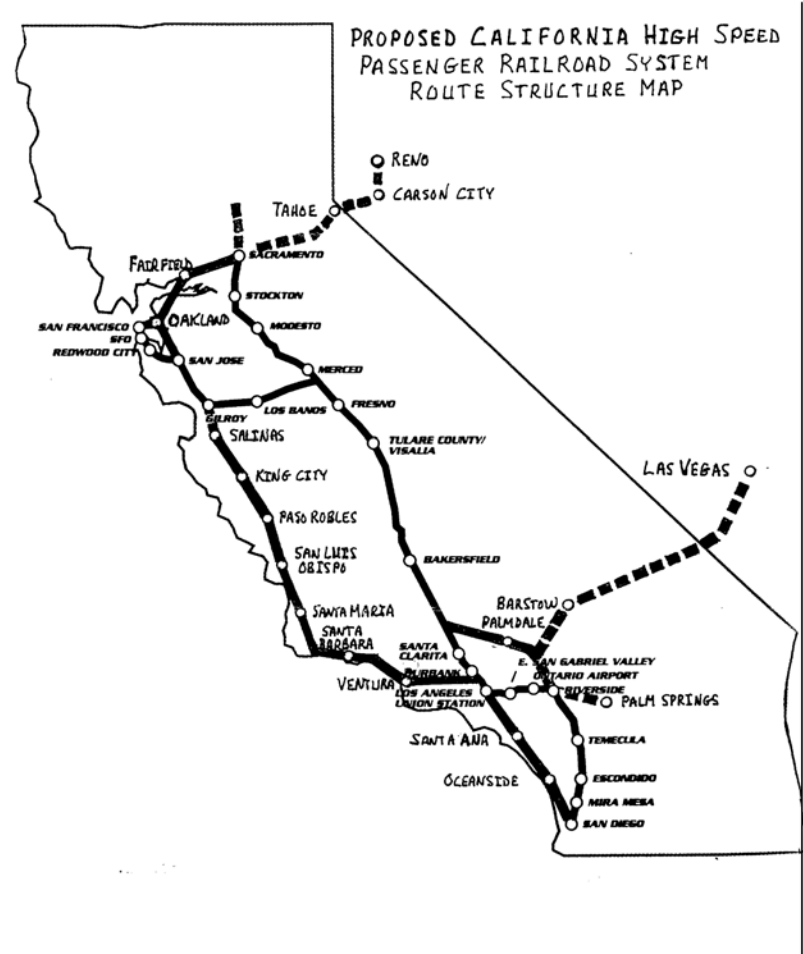
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The DPEIR/EIS requires discussions of these and other issues to escape being inadequate, incomplete, error-filled, and boilerplate saturated.

The Authority has refused and failed over many years to supply interested parties with more and detailed documents for our perusal.

For more information on this topic contact:

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**Response to Comments of California High Speed Rail Fantasies, August 30, 2004 (Letter O040)**

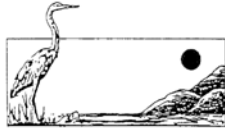
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Acknowledged. Please refer to Chapter 2 "Alternatives" of the Program EIR/EIS for the rationale of the development of the HST Alternative. Please see standard response 2.36.1 in regards to other potential HST links. The program EIR/EIS does not assume that the HST system would "replace existing railroad lines", but would instead compliment existing rail services. Please see standard response 2.31.4 in regards to potential station stops and variety of levels of service (express, skip-stop, local, etc.). Please see standard response 2.8.1 in regards to the safety of the HST system. Please see standard response 2.33.1 in regards to the use of freight railroad rights-of-way.

## Comment Letter O041

O041



Friends of the  
San Dieguito River Valley

P. O. Box 973 Del Mar CA 92014

August 25, 2004

Attn: California High Speed Train  
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments  
925 L Street, Suite 1425  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Comments on Draft HSR Program EIR/EIS**

To California High Speed Rail Authority:

The Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft California High Speed Rail (HSR) Program EIR/EIS. The Friends is an incorporated citizen group advocating for the preservation of land within the San Dieguito River Valley system. We have been active, since 1986, in testifying on various land uses in the River Valley, and in securing funding for a number of projects to enhance public access and appreciation of the River Valley's natural resources. The most recent projects are the site plan for a new interpretive learning center just east of I-5 and preservation of an historic bridge as an important bird sanctuary overlook on the southern shore of the San Dieguito Lagoon, west of I-5.

Our comments are limited to the proposed LOSSAN corridor into San Diego. We are particularly alarmed that the draft does not acknowledge the impact of the I-5/Penasquitos Bypass Option on the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park or the 440-acre, \$65-85 million San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration Project on which work will begin this spring.

Specifically:

1. The Draft Summary at S.2 lists key criteria used to assess LOSSAN alignment options. One criterion is to "maximize compatibility with existing and *planned* (emphasis ours) land uses." The draft fails to meet this criterion as follows:

There is no mention of the River Park or the River Park's Master Plan. There is also no mention of the Park's land acquisitions near the Bypass Option Project area and its planned restoration of disturbed lands in the River Valley. For instance on Page 3.15-16 the draft states "...vegetation is highly disturbed and is not considered a sensitive vegetation community". The Draft ignores the River Park's ongoing efforts to purchase and restore native vegetation critical to wildlife species and wildlife corridors. This is important since the I-5/Penasquitos Bypass Option would place double tracking across

restored wildlife corridors. The double tracking would also cut off the Regional Park trail from the river valley into Crest Canyon, with many well hiked trails in a Torrey Pines reserve (see attachment).

There is no mention of the San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration Project. Beginning its work next spring, the Project will restore approximately 440 acres of wetland to support a revitalized Lagoon and its habitat. The Project, funded and managed by Southern California Edison as an environmental mitigation project, includes restoration of tidal wetlands, reestablishment of historic uplands, expansion of freshwater and seasonal coastal wetland areas, and increased public access and interpretation. The San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, National Marine Fisheries Services, the California Coastal Commission and a variety of other state and local agencies are involved in this extraordinary effort. The Penasquitos By-Pass Option would jeopardize the success of the restoration project by causing habitat destruction, blockage of wildlife corridors, visual blight, noise and degradation of a unique regional natural resource.

The draft on Page 3.15-17 states in Section A that only *existing* conditions are considered when comparing the alignment options because changes are "speculative." And, "...no substantial change to existing conditions is assumed for purpose of the program-level evaluation and comparison of alternatives." The River Park and the Restoration Project are clearly not speculative. Eliminating this information allows the inclusion of an option at the program level that would not otherwise be considered and also results in eliminating other options less harmful to the environment. We feel it is a glaring deficiency in the draft.

2. Additional criteria listed in S.2 are inadequately addressed, also due to the failure to consider the impact of the Bypass Option on the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park and the San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration Project. The criteria are: "Minimize impacts on natural resources" and "Minimize impacts on parks and cultural resources."

The By-Pass Option would have a significant negative impact on the western end of the River Park, at the San Dieguito Lagoon. It is in this very area where the Park's "Coast to Crest Trail" extends from the ocean at Del Mar to the mountains - approximately 55 miles to the east. The trail is intended to enhance public awareness and enjoyment of the park's unique environment by offering firsthand experience of the spectacular views of the River Valley, the

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## Comment Letter 0041 Continued

restored lagoon, the bird sanctuaries and the ocean. Imposing a double track railway system along the southern shores of the Lagoon would create significant negative impacts including habitat destruction, blockage of wildlife corridors, visual blight, noise and degradation of the recreational value of this unique regional park and natural resource.

3. In S.3 the draft also states "The system should maximize existing transportation corridors, etc." There is *no* existing transportation corridor on the southern shores of the Lagoon. There is *only* a narrow two-lane road leading to a residential zoned very low density by the City of Del Mar *to preserve the sensitive environment*.
4. Omissions in the System-wide Environmental Impact Comparison (S.6) and the High-Speed Train Alignment Options Comparison (pages 6- 91 through 6-97 specifically) are as follows:

Biological Resources and Wetlands: Does not cite impact on the Lagoon or the Wetland Restoration Project. This must be addressed.

Section 4 (f) and 6 (f) Public Parks and Recreation: Potential impact on the 60,000 acre San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park is ignored. The draft statement that "potential impacts on several state beaches would be limited due to use of existing rail corridors" is misleading because it ignores the impact on a regional public park.

Hydrology and Water Resources: Impacts on the restored San Dieguito Lagoon are not included under the I-5/Penasquitos Bypass Option. Amazingly, the mitigation strategy listed is to "avoid or minimize footprint in floodplain" when, in fact, the Penasquitos Bypass Option places new double tracking in a flood plain area that is now a pristine wetland open space and is a critical part of a major mitigation project which is to begin next spring.

Cumulative Effects: The visual effects of the Penasquitos Bypass option ignore completely the impact of double tracking in an almost pristine wetland, marked for restoration and enhancement in 2005. It also ignores the current trail and wildlife corridor that enters Crest Canyon, a spectacular Torrey Pines reserve on the southern shore of the Lagoon.

In summary, the draft program omits from its analysis imminent land uses that would have a significant negative impact from the HSR I-5/Los Penasquitos Bypass option,

contrary to the draft's own stated analysis criteria. The draft program EIR does not fulfill its obligations under CEQA that requires California agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their projects, and decision makers rely on to determine whether or not to approve a project. In this particular case the deficiencies of the draft Program EIR also allows an Option to be considered that would otherwise not meet the analysis criteria and eliminates other options that might do less harm to the environment.

We feel a more complete environmental analysis would eliminate the I-5/Los Penasquitos Bypass Option from consideration and additional options would be considered. Limiting the LOSSAN alignment options to double tracking along the southern shores of the San Dieguito Lagoon or through the Los Penasquitos Lagoon does not provide *any* alternative to avoid damage to one of Southern California's most significant natural resources and public parks, its coastal lagoons and wetland habitats.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ann Gardner*  
President, Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley  
P.O. Box 973  
Del Mar California, 92014

Enclosures: Abstract for San Dieguito Lagoon Wetland Restoration Project  
Introduction and Concept Plan, San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open  
Regional Open Space Park

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## Comment Letter 0041 Continued

DRAFT

# Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the San Dieguito Wetland Restoration Project

## ABSTRACT

This project involves the development, design and ultimate implementation of a comprehensive restoration plan for approximately 440 acres in the western end of the San Dieguito River Valley, San Diego County, California. The project includes restoration of tidal wetlands, reestablishment of historic uplands, enhancement and expansion of freshwater and seasonal coastal wetland areas, and a public access and interpretation component. In accordance with the adopted San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan, a Park Master Plan for the project area has also been prepared to address these project components.

An essential component of this restoration project is the creation and restoration of tidally influenced wetlands. The major elements of tidal restoration would include: 1) restoring aquatic functions of the lagoon through the opening and permanent maintenance of the inlet channel and expansion of the existing tidal prism, and 2) creating subtidal and intertidal habitats on both the east and west sides of Interstate 5 (I-5). Tidal restoration would involve excavation/dredging of sediments to create/restore wetlands, excavation of the tidal inlet to promote continual tidal exchange, construction of berms along the river to maintain existing flood flows and direct sediment transport to the ocean, and identification of appropriate disposal sites for excavated/dredge material. Nesting sites for the California least tern, western snowy plover, and other shorebirds are also proposed.

It is anticipated that tidal restoration would be accomplished primarily by Southern California Edison and its partners, provided the restoration satisfies the conditions of the California Coastal Commission Permit for the construction and operation of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station Units 2 and 3. The San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority, Fish and Wildlife Service, and a variety of state and local agencies would be involved in the restoration of the project's other non-tidal wetland and upland restoration proposals, as well as the public access and interpretive aspects of the proposal.

The draft joint Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement analyzes six project alternatives, including the Mixed Habitat, Maximum Tidal Basin, Maximum Intertidal, Hybrid, Reduced Berm, and No Action alternatives. Potentially significant environmental impacts have been identified in the areas of land use, landform alteration/visual quality, hydrology/water quality, traffic circulation, noise, air quality, geology and soils, public utilities, public health and safety, biological resources, and natural resources. The project includes measures to mitigate some potential impacts, while other mitigation will be made a condition of subsequent permits.

## Lead Agencies



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Carlsbad Field Office



San Dieguito River Park  
Joint Powers Authority

## Cooperating Agency



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Los Angeles District, Regulatory Branch

INTRODUCTION

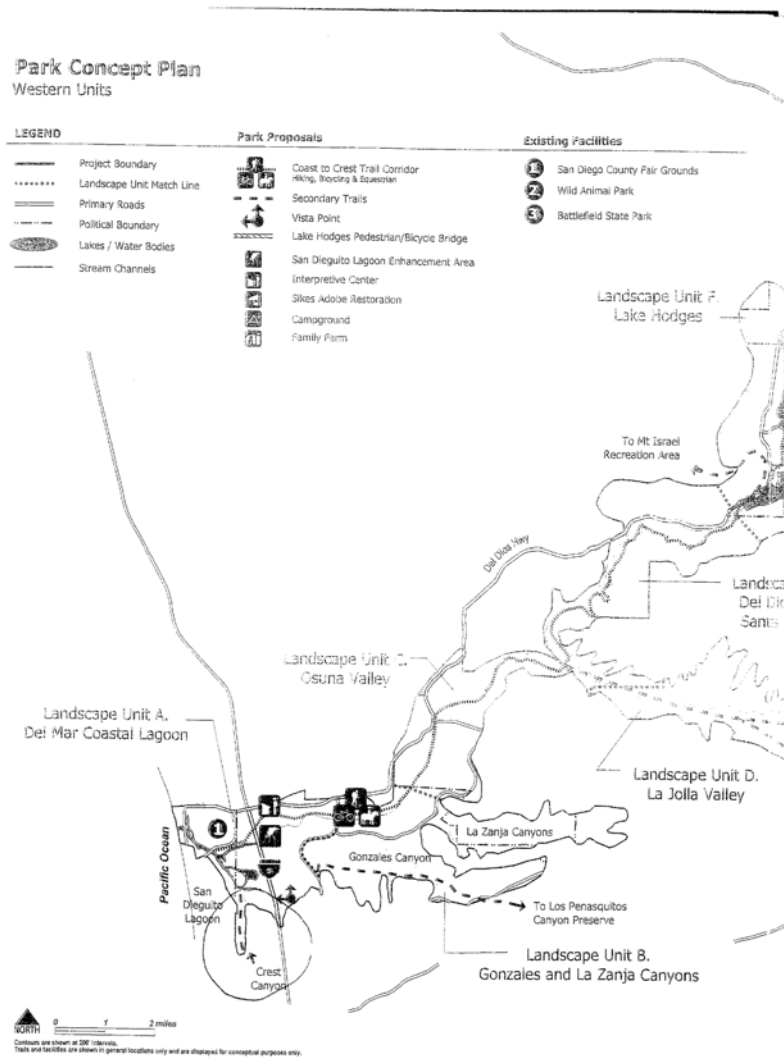
The San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan has been prepared to formally establish the vision and goals for the future use of the San Dieguito River Valley. Implementation of the proposals included within this plan by the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and its member agencies will ensure the preservation and protection of the sensitive resources within the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park's Focused Planning Area (FPA). All future proposals within the planning area should be consistent with the goals, objectives and development standards set forth in this plan.

The San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area extends for 55 miles from the desert just east of Volcan Mountain to the ocean at Del Mar (Figure No. 1). This river system forms a natural corridor, uniting a wide variety of native and non-native environments. Many of San Diego County's most sensitive habitats are found here, including oak and pine woodlands, coastal sage scrub, riparian woodland, native grassland and coastal wetlands. The quality of these habitats along with the largely rural character of the river valley provides a unique opportunity to experience the natural environments that once characterized all of the river valleys within San Diego County.

Also present within the river valley is a rich diversity of cultural resources. Evidence of human activity dating back at least 9,000 years is known from this area, with remnants of California's early history present throughout the length of the FPA. These resources include evidence of long term habitation by Native Americans, remains of campsites of the Portola Expedition of 1769, the battle sites of the Mexican-American War, remnants of early European settlements, and past and present agricultural activities.

The vision to create the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park reflects a commitment to protect the area's natural waterways and associated ecosystems, preserve its unique natural, cultural and agricultural resources, retain a regional network of wildlife corridors, and provide meaningful open space recreation areas for public enjoyment. Additionally, the vision includes a desire to develop within park visitors an appreciation for the natural environment and its importance both locally and globally.

## Comment Letter 0041 Continued



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**Response to Comments of Ann Gardner, President, Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, August 25, 2004  
(Letter 0041)**

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There is no further consideration of the LOSSAN Conventional Rail Improvements in this Final Program EIR/EIS. These potential improvements are the subject of the Caltrans LOSSAN Rail Improvements Program EIR/EIS (Draft PEIR/EIS SCH # 2002031067). These comments have been forwarded to Caltrans for consideration. Please see standard response 6.41.1, and Section 2.6.9 and Chapter 6A of the Final Program EIR/EIS document.